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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /082 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6089
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
DIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MPOL, MASS, LY, UR, AG, SY
SUBJ: SOVIET MILITARY FOCUSES ON THE MIDDLE EAST

REF: (A) MOSCOW 17441

1. PRAVDA AND OTHER CENTRAL PAPERS DEC 28 REPORT THAT DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV MET ON DEC 27 WITH SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF, GENERAL SHIHABI, WHO IS IN MOSCOW ON A VISIT. THE TWO WERE REPORTED TO HAVE HELD "A WARM, FRIENDLY CONVERSATION ON QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST."

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2. RED STAR OF DEC 28 REPORTS BRIEFLY ON THE VISIT TO LIBYA AND ALGERIA OF DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE, MARSHAL OF THE SOVIET UNION OGARKOV. WHILE IN LIBYA OGARKOV MET WITH QADHAFI, WITH WHOM HE HELD "AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST," AND IN ALGERIA OGARKOV MET WITH BOUMEDIENNE, WITH WHOM HE HELD A "WARM, FRIENDLY CONVERSATION ON SEVERAL

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QUESTIONS OF INTEREST TO BOTH SIDES."

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST WE HAVE HEARD OF THE VISIT OF THE SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF. FACT THAT HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SYRIAN ARMY SUPPLY CHIEF, GENERAL M.A. MUBAIED, AND THAT SOVIET ATTENDEES INCLUDED V.G. MOROZOV OF THE STATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS, WHO REGULARLY ATTENDS ARMS TRANSFER DISCUSSIONS, CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THE QUESTION OF SOVIET ARMS AID WAS CENTRAL TO THE CONVERSATIONS. IN THE SYRIAN CASE, MOSCOW PROMISED SUCH AID TO SYRIA WHEN SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM WAS HERE IN NOVEMBER (REFTEL). ALSO, "QUESTIONS OF MUTUAL INTEREST" IS THE STANDARD EUPHEMISM FOR ARMS SUPPLY DISCUSSIONS".

4. JUDGING FROM THE REPORTS OF OGARKOV'S TWO CONVERSATIONS, THE ONE WITH QADHAFI WENT LESS WELL ("EXCHANGE OF VIEWS" USUALLY INDICATES DIFFERENCES), WHEREAS THE SOVIETS AND THE ALGERIANS APPARENTLY SAW MORE OR LESS EYE TO EYE.
TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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Litigation History:
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